

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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5 December 2013

GHA104685.E

Ghana: New Patriotic Party (NPP), including origin, structure, leadership and membership; treatment of NPP members by authorities (2011-November 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

Sources report that the New Patriotic Party (NPP) was founded in 1992 (Europa 2013a; PHW 2012, 543; NPP n.d.a). The NPP is reportedly the main opposition party in Ghana (Reuters 9 Apr. 2013; Deutsche Welle 30 Nov. 2012; *Daily Trust* 14 Jan. 2013).

On its website, the NPP describes itself as a "liberal democratic party" that champions "multi-party democracy" (n.d.a). The NPP's aims and objectives reportedly include:

- protecting human rights and rule of law;
- building a "free and democratic system of government"
- reducing "excessive centralization" in the government
- promoting a "vibrant, free-market economy"
- improving climate for private enterprise by decreasing bureaucratic restrictions. (NPP n.d.c)

Similarly, the 2012 *Political Handbook of the World* (PHW) reports that the NPP's platform advocates for human rights, strengthening democracy, and holding free and fair elections (2012, 543). According to Ghana's Electoral Commission, the NPP's slogan is "Development in Freedom" (Ghana n.d.). Sources describe the NPP as being a centre-right party (Freedom House 2012; PHW 2012, 543). According to PHW, the NPP is viewed as promoting the interests of the business class (ibid.). Similarly, an NPP spokesperson noted in an article by Agence France-Presse (AFP) that merchants and businesspeople are perceived as being pro-NPP (13 Dec. 2012).

1.1 NPP Election Results

Sources report that in the national elections held in December 2012, the NPP's presidential candidate Nan Dankwa Akufo-Addo won 47.7 percent of the vote, compared to 50.7 percent for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) candidate John Dramani Mahama (Europa 2013b; IHS Global Insight 30 Aug. 2013; *Daily Trust* 14 Jan. 2013). The NDC reportedly won 148 of 275 seats in parliament (Europa 2013b; Freedom House 2013; *Africa Confidential* 11 Jan. 2013), while the NPP won 122 (ibid.) or 123 of 275 seats (Europa 2013b; Freedom House 2013). International observers reportedly described the elections as "free and fair" (*Daily Trust* 14 Jan. 2013; AFP 13 Dec. 2013; US 19 Apr. 2013, 11). According to Freedom House, there was "only limited violence" during the election (2013). Similarly, the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012* says that there were "a few reports of isolated violence" (19 Apr. 2013, 11).

Sources report that the NPP made claims of election fraud and filed a petition against the election results with the Supreme Court (*Africa Confidential* 6 Sept. 2013; Reuters 29 Aug. 2013; IHS Global Insight 30 Aug. 2013). In August 2013, the Supreme Court made their ruling in favour of the initial election results (ibid.; *Africa Confidential* 6 Sept. 2013; Reuters 29 Aug. 2013). Akufo-Addo was reportedly disappointed with the ruling but said that he would abide by it (ibid.; IHS Global Insight 30 Aug. 2013).

2. Structure

According to its website, the organizational structure of the NPP includes a National Council of Elders, which consists of a maximum of 30 representatives who "have contributed significantly to the formation, welfare and progress of the Party and its forebears" (NPP n.d.d). There is also a Regional Council of Elders for members who have made a "significant contribution" to the party at the regional and constituency levels (ibid.). In addition, the NPP has several committees including the Finance Committee, the Constitutional Committee, the Organization Committee, the Research Committee, the Disciplinary Committee, the Vetting Committee, the National Executive Committee, the Steering Committee, the Regional Executive Committee, and the Constituency Executive Committee (ibid.).

3. Leaders

Sources indicate that Nan Dankwa Akufo-Addo was the NPP presidential candidate in 2012 (NPP n.d.b; PHW 2012, 543), as well as in 2008 (ibid.).

Several sources indicate that Jake Okanta Obetsebi Lamptey is the NPP Chair and Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie is the NPP Secretary General (PHW 2012, 543; NPP n.d.b; Ghana n.d.). In contrast, Europa World Online lists Nan Ohene Ntow as the General Secretary (2013a).

The NPP website lists the following NPP leaders as "national executives": Jacob Otanka Obetsebi-Lamptey, National Chairman; Abubakar Sulemana, National Nasara Coordinator; Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, National Presidential Candidate; Dr. Mahamdu Bawumia, National Running Mate; Fred Oware, National First Vice Chairman; Sheik T.B. Damba; Sophia Horner-Sam, National Third Vice Chairman; Kwadwo Owusu-Afriyie, National General Secretary; Esther Dsifa Ofori, National Treasurer; Alhaji Moctar Bamba, National Organizer; and Otiko Afisah Djabah, National Women's Organizer (n.d.b).

PHW 2012 refers to Mahamudu Bawumia as the 2008 Vice Presidential candidate, and lists the following additional NPP leaders: John Agyekum Kufuor, Former President of Ghana; and Alhaji Aliu Mahama, Former Vice President of Ghana (PHW 2012, 543).

4. Membership

Information about NPP membership was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. According to the NPP's website page, the NPP's "membership and support spans the length and breadth of Ghana with offices and local parties

in each of the 230 constituencies across the country" (n.d.a). Information about the requirements and procedures to become a member, as well as information about NPP membership cards, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

5. Treatment

According to the 2012 Freedom House report, *Countries at the Crossroads*, both the NDC and NPP "engage muscle-bound enforcers to intimidate political opponents and maximize votes in their electoral strongholds" (2012).

5.1 Incidents of Violence

The *Ghanaian Chronicle* reports that there were clashes between the NPP and NDC regarding electoral registration, and that an NPP parliamentary candidate, Ursula Owusu, was assaulted by alleged NDC supporters "with broken bottles and sticks" at the Tarzan registration centre in Odododiodoo Constituency (18 Apr. 2012). Further information about this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to Deutsche Welle, in August 2012, there were reportedly clashes between NPP supporters and NDC supporters in the Odododiodoo constituency that resulted in the injury of approximately 12 people, including the NPP activist Ursula Owusu, who was accused of trying to prevent NDC supporters of registering to vote (30 Nov. 2012). Further information about this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In October 2012, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* reported that the NPP's Constituency Organiser, Peter Mensah, was assaulted with acid in Techiman and sustained "excessive burns" all over his body (*Ghanaian Chronicle* 29 Oct. 2012). The NPP Communications Director for Techiman reportedly accused the Techiman Municipal Executive and NDC parliamentary candidate of being responsible for the attack (ibid.).

In November 2012, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* reported that a 10-year-old boy who made a personal statement at an NPP rally in Bremang in support of the NPP candidate, was abducted and assaulted by "suspected thugs of the ruling NDC" in retaliation for his statement (22 Nov. 2012). Further information about this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

On 4 December 2012, a few days prior to the national elections, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* reported on an attack against an NPP Member of Parliament (MP), Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, by a "group of thugs suspected to be members of the ruling party" (*Ghanaian Chronicle* 4 Dec. 2012). The NPP's Deputy National Communication Director reportedly stated that NPP "supporters and leading members continue to suffer at the hands of its political opponents" and characterized the NDC as perpetrating "abuses" and acting with "impunity" (ibid.). Further information about this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

AFP reports that on 13 December 2012, a week after the national elections, a group of men with machetes attacked people in a busy shopping area of Accra and looted the shops (AFP 13 Dec. 2012). An NPP spokesperson blamed the NDC for the attack, claiming that the NDC sent men to attack merchants believed to be pro-NPP (ibid.). A spokesperson for the NDC, however, claimed that their party members intervened after one of them had been attacked (ibid.). Further information about this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to a statement by the NPP's Deputy Communication Director, as reported by the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, on 16 January 2013, a group of NDC supporters attacked NPP supporters and "ordinary Ghanaians" in front of the Supreme Court building; victims included the NPP activist Nana Kofi Damoah, who was reportedly assaulted with sticks, a pregnant woman and a teenager wearing an NPP scarf (*Ghanaian Chronicle* 17 Jan. 2013). The NPP Deputy Communication Director said that the assailants were armed with weapons such as canes and whipped victims (ibid.). The statement called on the President and NDC leadership to "call their supporters to order" and to hold NDC members who "use NDC supporters as instruments of political violence" accountable (ibid.).

The *Ghanaian Chronicle* reports that on 12 July 2013, two NPP members were attacked by a mob at the premises of a radio station in Sunyani following a radio discussion programme (*Ghanaian Chronicle* 18 July 2013). The Brong Ahafo Regional Communication Director of the NPP blamed the attack on supporters of the NDC, but also expressed faith in Ghana's legal system to address the crime (ibid.). Further information about this incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

5.2 Treatment by Security Forces

According to Freedom House, the NDC government has used the Bureau of National Investigation to investigate former NPP officials for corruption, which the NPP claims is politicized (2013). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The NPP reportedly made an official statement faulting the police for not providing sufficient protection to its members in April 2012 in response to clashes with the NDC during electoral registration (*Ghanaian Chronicle* 19 Apr. 2012). They stated:

The current posture of the police to take no action to protect our party members and ordinary Ghanaians, in the face of such acts of violence, intimidation and exclusion at the hands of the NDC, particularly, in Odododiodoo, poses a serious threat to the maintenance of peace and security nationwide. (ibid.)

According to *Africa Confidential*, the NPP has criticized Rose Atinga Bio, the Director of Administration at the police headquarters, for failing to prosecute violent attacks by NDC supporters when she was in charge of the Greater Accra Region police (11 Jan. 2013). Corroborating information or further details of these attacks could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Associated Press (AP) reports that on 12 December 2012, the police, armed with M-16s and AK-47s, raided an NPP office and took "laptops and documentation" (12 Dec. 2012). *Africa Confidential* similarly reports that the NPP claims its research annexe was raided by armed police (11 Jan. 2013). AP reports that the NPP members in the raided office had been working on contesting the election results of the previous week (AP 12 Dec. 2013). A police spokesperson claimed the police were acting on a tip that there were weapons stashed in the office, but that no weapons had been found and that nothing had been taken from the site (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact representatives of the following were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: New Patriotic Party of Ghana.

Internet sites, including: Africa Files; *Africa Research Bulletin*; Afrik news; Amnesty International; ecoi.net; Factiva; Human Rights Watch; International Federation for Human Rights; National Democratic Congress; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld.

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